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Drug review task force appointed; to hold meeting

FRANKFORT, Ky. - A task force to review off-label uses of cancer drugs will hold its first meeting on Friday, October 9, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. in the hearing room of the Kentucky Department of Insurance, 215 W. Main St., Frankfort.

The Off-Label Drug Use Review Task Force will meet to review and make recommendations to the commissioner regarding the use of drugs as treatment for conditions other than the ailments for which the drugs are commonly indicated and prescribed. The task force was established as a part of HB 618, a bill relating to health insurance coverage for cancer drugs, which was passed by the 1998 General Assembly and signed into law by the governor.

The law directed the commissioner of insurance to establish a panel of five medical experts to review off-label uses of drugs not included in any official medical literature. The members of the panel, three medical oncologists and two physicians, are: **Dr. Kenneth A. Foon**, Lexington; **Dr. George H. Goldsmith, Jr.**, Louisville; **Dr. Stanley Lowenbraun**, Louisville; **Dr. Allen L. Tinsley**, Paducah; and **Dr. Martha F. Greenwood**, Lexington. As required by HB 618, recommendations for committee membership were made by the Kentucky Medical Association.

The panel has been directed to make recommendations to the commissioner as needed and to evaluate particular disputes for payments of off-label drugs. The commissioner of insurance has the authority to direct insurers to make payments for off-label drug use.

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